8:Cook M-3 (1900-1901) 1909
SP8 Bororo SP8

each day during the weeks that we remained in their vicinity, and stayed by us faithfully until dark; and though coming and going continually, we had always a full house. If I opened a trunk, they were on the alert to peer into it, and to handle whatever struck their fancy. When we ate, every mouthful of food we took and our manner of eating; or if we wrote, or conversed, or photographed, or made our toilet, our every act was observed with the closest attention and commented upon in muttering tones by the horde of naked savages that encircled us, of which the women and children formed the outer ring.

They sat or lounged upon our boxes, benches and tables, or what served as a table, leaned against the stake walls of our hut, sat cross-legged on dry ox-hides on the ground, or upon flat stones or slabs of wood, or squatted around our pot of food as it boiled at the camp-fire, eyeing it hungrily, always leaving a patch of red grease on anything they sat upon or reclined against. A few dozed occasionally; some smoked when they could get a bit of tobacco; others roasted hunks of beef at our fire, or lazily picked off and ate the kernels from a roasted ear of corn; several nibbled pieces of the heart of a dwarf palm; while others, the boys, slowly devoured bits of fish that had been roasted black, peeling back the skin and scales as they ate; or amused themselves shooting with rude bows and arrows at a stump just outside our hut. The men gossiped a little among themselves in gutteral sounds, looking vacantly into space as expressionless as a professional gambler, and never once glancing toward the one addressed; or else asked us a few questions in the limited language that we knew in common. They would sit for hours at a time in every conceivable position and distortion of the body, uttering scarcely a word.

They are very fond of tobacco, and resorted to various tricks to obtain a small piece. Whenever they did any work for us, or made a trade, they invariably demanded a piece of tobacco from my companion in part payment. Besides trading, they availed themselves of numerous expedients to obtain

/454 cont./ Caldas, who, to his sorrow, saw that his
578 tent-mate who was also taking part had her breast scratched, forced the
[627] great chief /455/ Moguyokuri in; with tremendous calm the latter stepped into the noisy crowd and suddenly it was quiet. There was not a sound; his mighty arm shoved aside the three most dangerous women at once. Maria had definitely lost; she did not say a word and stood scowling, arms crossed, her bosom heaving violently, while a friend on her side smoothed her tousled hair. More disgruntled ones tried to unleash the storm once again, but the laughter of Corona won out;

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Fig. 127. Bororó woman.

578 they dispersed, and the shrill old woman, at a triumphant trot, was led off by three women.

●517 Shaking our heads, we turned our steps homeward toward our shack, but there, too, we were driven back by an infernal noise. The soldiers were dancing and singing in the moonlight with their mulattoes and Indian women; they were making music with harmonica, with fork and plate -- carnival everywhere!

[526] I went back to the men's house; two men were practicing wrestling. They grasped each other under the arms, bending far forward, and remained in this position for a long time, until one of them suddenly tried one leg, or rather his heel, to press in the knee-hollow of the other one and knock him over, but he was lifted up and lost.

/455 cont./

517 [352] him over, but he was lifted up and lost. Small fires were burning alongside the house. The men were lying in a row, one beside the other, their heads resting on chunks of wood, to sleep out there; they were chatting and biting stalks of sugar cane with their teeth, tossing the remains in an arc behind them. They were very much amused when I squatted down beside the fire and wrote down their words. At small fires to one side women were sleeping with their husbands; children were still running around gaily late in the night and romping across the plaza.

648 /456/ Meat distribution. 26 March. An efficient administration would find an excellent means of getting the Indians accustomed to order by the manner of its food distribution. But no one thinks of fair equality, either in rations or in other things. Everything is arbitrary. The crude scene at the distribution of the tapíra, the ox, about two of which are slaughtered weekly and which represent a cheap food in the Mato Grosso, defies all description. The Brazilians could hardly make things easier for themselves. The pieces of meat and chopped bones are piled up in layers on top of one another in a great heap on a skin in front of the house; the Indians, men and women and older children, some of them armed with baskets, stand waiting to one side, one of the cadets gives the signal, and the whole crowd pounces on the meat and bones like a pack of wolves. It was such a disgusting sight that I lost my sense of humor, although a circle of onlookers regarded the spectacle with a certain enjoyment. Especially the idiot Dyapokuri, a cretin type, attracted general attention; with animal savagery the imbecile, the deputy of the men's house, seized three huge pieces and, with grunts of triumph, dragged them away with shining eyes while the spittle ran down his hanging lower jaw. If this were nothing but a crude occasional joke, but no, it is the regular, local procedure. The Indian is thereby reduced to conditions which in his hunting life he overcame ages ago; for it is one of the chief purposes of the institution of the barí or medicine men (as we shall see) to prevent discord in the distribution of booty, a problem which the latter, it is true, solve by securing the best pieces for themselves.

[732]

[756] [626]

/488 cont./

283 flock or a few hairs placed together and had fastened them to the short end of the stick, the larger part of the little stick, below the whorl, would be rolled on the right thigh with the right hand, the spindle being held slantwise; thus, the thread was formed on the shorter part of the stick above the whorl. The finished thread was wound on the long part below the whorl.

The hair-threads were plaited into a cord which was worn around the head hair, around the waist, or, for protection against the snapping of the bowstring, around the wrist. Palm fiber cord was twisted by hand on the thigh. The great toe was often used in string work.

[286] Actual weaving, that is to say, the interlacing of threads crossing at right angles, was unknown. The men made narrow [301] bands out of cotton threads, /489/ into which porcupine quills were plaited and which were worn like suspenders, cf. Figs. 141 /see p. 610/ and 129 /see p. 589/, as chest strings by both sexes, as well as arm bands by artfully interlacing threads between two thin rods.

461 How elegantly and neatly the men worked was particularly striking in the making of arrows. There were so many small dexterous movements which one would have expected only from the delicate hands of women. Among these I include particularly the decoration with tiny colored feathers, each of which was placed on the ground one by one and carefully arranged.

Nor can there be more chatter and laughter in a spinning room than there was here in the baitó. True, it was not very womanly when suddenly, for the sake of variety, two of the workers got up and staged a regular wrestling match which was watched with great interest by the others. They stood up, wrestled, threw each other, and resumed their work or lay down again for ●517 dolce far niente. For comfortable idlers were never lacking; [832] and there was also seldom lacking, though the women otherwise stayed away, a loving couple who lay under a common red coverlet and dallied. No one paid any attention to them except a few friends troubled by mild jealousy, who at the moment were being neglected by the common lover and had to be content to sit beside the pair and chat with them.